

SATURDAY, February 18, 1865.

THE various speculations and expressions of opinion to which our movements have given rise would, if accurately noted, supply the most interesting exposition of what we have to contend with on the one hand, and what we have to encourage us on the other. We should gather from it the most convincing testimony of the necessity of some such effort as that which we are now making to remove the general ignorance on all points connected with Building, whether as regards the science or its professors and practitioners. Great and experienced men are to be found who hold up their hands in astonishment at the rashness, as they consider it, of our enterprise—men who argue upon general principles against the success of our plan. They say the Builders are not a reading class; nor a class at all, either in themselves or their connection, to support a periodical like the one we propose to give. The publishers in particular, and they, in their experience on all points connected with publication, are certainly entitled to be considered oracles—the publishers generally have but a mean opinion, or say they can form no opinion at all of the probabilities of success. They confess themselves astonished at the numbers of the Building Class; but they mistrust the conclusions to which we have come upon the data which these numbers supply. No little have publishers had to do with the Building Class, and so little the Builders with the publishers, that they might have lived on the opposite sides of the same globe—regards the acquaintance each has with the other for any practical interchange of their mutual special interests; but we propose to bring them into more intimate union, and to make the publisher at least confess that he knew not one half the territory over which his appointment was designed to extend.

But there are parties connected with the arts who might have been supposed to have lived in something like a consciousness of the immense, as it is intimate, alliance that subsists between them and the Builders as members. It may be said, of our common fraternity; and these are as ignorant of the more important facts as it is possible to suppose men to be. An eminent sculptor addressed us the other day in a strain of this character: "The Builders," said he, "are too small a body to support a class paper; look around you," he continued, "and you find them dotted here and there only, and not like the Shoemakers, or the Publicans, or the Butchers, meeting us at every turn." It should be stated that he had not seen our Precursor Number. We asked him if he was aware of the fact that the Carpenters alone outnumbered the Shoemakers, and that the whole body of Builders are as five to one of that very numerous class: that in round numbers we had 130,000 Carpenters, 60,000 Masons, 40,000 Bricklayers, 30,000 Painters, Plumbers, and Glaziers, and so on. And that three were an intelligent, a reading, a thinking, and provident class, and well to do in the world. At this he expressed his surprise, but yet in such terms as to show us that there was a great deal of incredulity mixed with it. Again we referred to them as an advertising class, on which he seemed amazed, but more so when we pointed out to him seventy-one advertisements in the Precursor, and expressed our belief that shortly it would amount to five times that number. On this head, indeed, it would be easy for us to give convincing proof, were we so disposed, and we know not but we may, for the curiosity of the matter, some day do it; we could print the largest part of a paper in thick-set adver-

tisements pertaining to building, and all selected from the London and provincial papers of one week: sales and falls of timber, of brick earth, and minerals; of building land and general building materials; business to be disposed of, contracts to let, situations wanted, and the like; indeed, there is no such class, no class so much in need of, and so well able to support their own weekly paper. Other parties we have met with, and reports have been brought to our ears, from men moving in the very ranks of the workmen themselves, who express a most disparaging opinion, not of our objects, or our exertions, but of their fellow-workmen: they say, in so many words, that "we are throwing pearls before swine." The plan is good, they admit; but they urge that the mass of the workmen are too fond of amusements, and so given to loaf and sensual indulgences, as to deny the hope that they will, to any extent of numbers, seek to benefit by it. These people, we are afraid, increase this class by themselves. Others again urge, that the reading appetite is vitiated and depressed, and that unless we pander to the passions of the multitude "by strong and exciting and vulgar matter," we use their own words, we may look in vain for subscribers. Against all these we have to contend, and we are utterly opposed to them in opinion on all such grounds as the foregoing; but in one point we agree—we certainly have an uphill affair. The ground we have chosen is unoccupied and untrodden. We have a great task in reversing the usage of centuries. We must, therefore, call upon the workmen themselves to aid us in fighting their own battle—not a battle against interests or individuals, but against ignorance and exclusion. And we reiterate our call on the friends of the working classes, for whose satisfaction, and the satisfaction of all who care to know it, we now make our profession of purpose as regards the end and object of our labours.

We do not want to inflame the mind of the workman with discontent; we do not want to unsettle or disturb the relations of society; we do not wish to raise any man above his proper condition. To the contrary, we would promote and teach contentment; we would settle and consolidate; we would give every man his own proper level. We consider that it is too much the tendency of the agitation of these times to effect the opposite of all this. The best words are perverted from their true meaning, or misunderstood; a false principle prevails and regulates our intelligence, and the world runs counter to its own wishes, by reason of its neglect of simple truths, which he who runs may read.

As regards that much abused word education, and as to our purpose to educate the workman, a right understanding will suffice to disarm it of its terror to the mind of many who have seen in its perdition or abuse that which they have ascribed to education itself. What is an educated man? Here we fancy we hear ten thousand voices exclaim. What a question! And yet we challenge the whole of that ten thousand to give the true answer, if they reply in the generally accepted meaning of the term. Education is too frequently confounded with book-learning, and that is considered to be knowledge which is only the letter to it. Take your educated man, as he is called, and put him into the workshop or the sphere of operation in that art on which he descends so learnedly, and he must give way at first at least) to the unlettered, or, as he is termed, the uneducated artifice and labourer. A mind

well stored with the facts that bear upon any particular art, may be likened to a well-furnished cabinet of tools; but it requires a practiced hand to apply those tools with skill and to a useful purpose—all the rest is mere injury; and of this sort of theory we have a great deal too much even now.

Aye! we will take the rods, unlettered Carpenter of the most obscure country workshop, and march him up as an educated man against the most learned pundit of our universities. We do not mean to say that the Carpenter is a better man for his rudeness, or because he may read or write badly, or not at all; but we take to us an illustration of the meaning we attach to the word education in its practical sense, and we will now say a word as to its bearing on the course we have chalked out for ourselves.

It is true that the relations of society and its workings in these times appear very mysterious, confused, and complicated; but what does it arise from? Does any man imagine it to be more difficult to regulate domestic or civil government now, than it was in the simplest state of pastoral life? Not a whit the more, provided the education of the heart, the bringing out of its virtuous tendencies be properly studied and promoted. Teach the workman his duties to the several relations in which he is placed, as much as you can at making him skilful in the handling of his tools, or the fashioning of his materials, and you have educated him for the whole end of his existence; but he wants few or none of the theories of matters that are above him.

It is to settle then, to calm, to quell the agitation of purpose which now disturbs the public mind, to do our part in this, as we conceive, great work of national repair, to bring into harmony the now conflicting powers and forces, and to point out our humble way to direct them to one end and object, of powerful and profitable action, that our exertions will be directed.

And how do we propose to do this? how do we aim to be useful in this work of charity,—for surely charity is most rightly which shall effect the ends of peace! Why, by bearing in mind and acting upon the old proverb, "Charity beginneth at home." We begin with our class—we begin at home.

Oh! there are rougher times, bright achievements higher, glory greater to be reaped in this sphere than in all the turn of politics, or the dread suffer of war! Let us warn our countrymen, but particularly that great body of which we have the honour of being a member,—the building class,—from the fretting and exciting consideration of subjects which only lead to pain the mind and distract it from acquiring that solid profit which a skilful exercise of his craft procures from every intelligent workman, let the quiet habits of a steady industry be enforced upon each of us; let our curiosity and admiring thoughts be bent so far as business goes upon the investigation of the principles in science, and the properties in nature which affect the things we construct, and the materials of which they are constructed; let the workshop and the building have out working hours, and our studies and families the rest, even to a participation in our studies, for these in most instances may be made the interest, and now and then the delight of every family circle.

Is it nothing, good countrymen and esteemed fellow-craftsmen, that we have to boast of honours and achievements such as neither military daring, or statesmanlike craft or wisdom has ever attained, or can attain to? What are